

ARAUNAH'S THRESHING FLOOR

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A SERMON
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"This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel."
1 Chronicles 22:1

IT Will be fresh in your recollection that David had committed a great sin against the Lord. In truth, all the people of Israel had, for some years, gone astray from God, and when He determined to punish them, He made the sin of their ruler an occasion for visiting their iniquities upon their head. David had determined to number the people. He carried out his purpose in the teeth of precept, precedent, and protest. It would seem that thereby he trespassed on the prerogative of the priests and violated the Levitical law.

Thereupon Gad, the prophet, came to him with the choice of three punishments. He selected, as the lesser evil, and preferable to famine or the sword of the foe, the pestilence, saying, "It is better to fall into the hand of God than into the hand of man." Jerusalem was, therefore, for three days, ravaged by a terrible plague.

The strong men fell down in the streets and the women died at the mill. The little children perished from the breast and the aged were smitten down with a stroke. For three days the fatal disease had proceeded with its ravages, when suddenly the angel of the Lord, who had caused this slaughter, appeared before David.

He beheld the messenger of judgment standing in bodily form on the threshing floor of a man called Araunah. David was summoned by God to attend upon this angel, and when he approached, he saw him with the sword drawn in his hand, as though he were about to smite even till the going down of the sun. David, moved by the Spirit of God, slays a bullock, piles up an altar, kindles a fire, and as the smoke of the bullock ascends to heaven, the angel, who was visible before their eyes, to the joy of every one of them, thrust back the sword into its scabbard, saying, "It is enough."

Now, David seemed to have been moved by an inward impulse to consider that this spot, though nothing but a piece of ground beaten hard for the threshing of corn by the feet of bullocks, must be, henceforth a sacred place—and he said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of sacrifice for Israel."

I scarcely need remind you of a coincidence which may probably have been known to David, that on this very spot Abraham had, many generations before, drawn the knife to slay his son Isaac. The mountain was thus doubly typical of that sacrifice of Christ which marks the place where God founds His temple and where all sacrifice rendered by the saints of God to their God must be offered.

At first the Lord only showed the fact that He would give His Son. Yon hoary patriarch, with his only begotten, dearly-beloved child of promise all bound and lying on the wood, unsheathing the knife to slay his son, was a graphic picture of the Eternal Father, who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.

Abraham taught the fact of the sacrifice, while to David the reason of that sacrifice of Christ was explained. He was sacrificed to stay the plague—the plague of sin, the punishment of our iniquities. Just as the bullock at Araunah's threshing floor, when hewn in pieces and laid smoking upon the altar, stayed the pestilence, so Christ, bleeding upon Calvary, the Lamb of God's passover, the sacred firstling of JEHOVAH's choice and dedication, makes atonement, and the plague is stayed.

David then selected this spot as henceforward the place of the temple, and the spot where the one altar should stand. To me this looks very significant. I hope, in a few words, to make you think it interesting and instructive. First, I shall try to *explain the occurrence itself spiritually*, and then to *explain the consecration of the floor mystically*.

I. THE OCCURRENCE ITSELF AND THE VARIED SYMBOLS IT UNFOLDS.

David sins and an angel smites—David offers sacrifice and the angel stays. Four lessons are suggested. First, *there is such a thing as sin*. Men fight hard to try and prove that there is not. In vain they strive, for as long as the book inspired is extant, and so long as there is one man on the face of the earth with a conscience clear, healthy, and undrugged, to bear witness with that book, sin will be discovered to be exceeding sinful.

A breach of the divine law, though it be committed by a man after God's heart, is not overlooked or counted venial. Sin cannot be winked at by the Most High. Though it receive the sanction of the very best of men, it has as much virus as when committed by the most debased. The sin of ignorance is as disastrous as the sin of willfulness. The wrong act performed with a right motive would still be deadly.

Sin is exceeding sinful. When I see David and the elders of Israel with sackcloth on their loins and ashes on their heads, bowing before this angel, I discern that there is something in sin which ought to make us hide our heads and weep, and wail, and humble ourselves before the Most High. Let us wake up to a sense of the dire reality of transgression—it is a frightful fact, not a foolish fancy. In the presence of the angel, this admits of no doubt.

That *sin must be punished* is taught here with equal distinctness. This looks like a platitude, but it is so often disputed, that we are constrained to assert it and to reassert it. Yea, we sound it forth as with a trumpet, that wherever there is an iniquity, there must be a penalty, for sin must be punished. The good order of the universe requires it. The justice of God demands it. The Book of God threatens it. The hand of God continually executes it.

The supposition that because God is merciful, He will, therefore, overlook sin, is as delusive as it is dangerous. It is one of Satan's lies. In like manner, the theory that God is a Universal Father, and that the punishments He awards are not judicial, but corrective—the mild chastenings of a gentle discipline import only with a view of winning back His erring children, and not the terrible denunciation of an angry Sovereign, or the inevitable comes of a violated law.

That theory, palatable though it may be to the fallen creature, is but a poisonous drink wherewith Satan would drug the souls of men who are bent on indulging their lusts till they are drowned in perdition. Ah! no, though God is merciful, He is just. Though He can pardon the sinner, sin must be punished. The two facts are made consistent in the cross of Christ, where the sin was expiated, where the sinner was represented.

But be assured, O sinner, that if you build your hope on any theory which denies that debt must be paid, that crime must be avenged, that sin must be punished—you are misjudging the law by which you must be judged. You are arguing on premises which have no basis but dreams. You are dallying with disappointment and death.

I remember a poor man interrogating me thus. "Sir," said he, "I want to know how my sin can be forgiven." "By the blood of Christ," was my answer. "Yes," said he, "but I do not understand that. What I want to know is this"—and he put it plainly—"if God does not punish me for what I have done, all I have to say is, He ought." I explained to him how he could punish Christ instead of us, and so be just, and by finding a substitute, provide a pardon. He understood the plan of grace and rejoiced in the Gospel.

That way of putting it—which I am sure the conscience of every man must make him feel to be true—struck me as forcible. The Judge of all the earth, the Author of the law, must vindicate His own prerogative. In order to do this, every transgression must receive its recompense—as the sin, so the penalty. It is not meet and fit that I should enjoy the sweets of sin without partaking of its bitters.

As I gaze on yonder angel bright, with flaming sword, I hear God say to me—addressing my eyes rather than my ears—“Sin must be punished.” As he smites right and left, as dead corpses lie in his awful pathway, as he passes on and his breath is pestilence, and before him burn hot coals of fire, I see in that dreadful vision the tremendous fact that vengeance pursues crime, that vindictive punishment follows vicious practices. God will by no means spare the guilty. Cursed is everyone that has broken the law of God.

Yet, were this all, we could only see in this vision an increase of our miseries. But blessed be God, we discern in the vision which David beheld a *sacrifice for sin*. The sword will not return to the scabbard through the force of prayer. Not the pleadings of David combined with the humiliation of the elders of Israel, though sackcloth and ashes be on their loins, can prevail to avert the vengeance or appease the wrath.

Sin had unsheathed the sword and without a sin-offering there was no sheathing it again. Had David and those senators wept until their eyes were dry, had they lacerated their flesh till the wounds began to mortify, it had availed nothing. Or had they brought forth all the priests with smoking incense and paraded the ark with solemn pomp, yet had not the angel stirred.

Nothing sufficed until the guileless victim appears on the scene, the warrant of death is carried into execution, and the life-blood is shed on the threshing floor. Not till the bullock, cleft in pieces, was laid high on the altar, and the wood was heaped on the offering, and the fire coming straight from heaven in a mass of flame arose before the Most High, were the signals reversed and the message announced, “It is enough. Sheathe thy sword.”

Call this type, parable, or illustration, but know, O sinner, that nothing can ever prevent God from punishing your sins. Your reformation, your prayers, your tears will not do it. Though your penitence be ever so humiliating. Though your resolutions for the future be ever so determined. Though your zeal for an universal reformation be ever so glowing, the outlook were hopeless.

Could you give rivers of oil or ten thousand of the fattest of fatted beasts, your property or your profits would be of no account. Should you give your children for your transgression—the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul—still does the inexorable decree stand fast. Sin must have punishment. There is only one method whereby the sword can be sheathed—by Christ’s suffering in your room, and place, and stead.

The Son of the Virgin, who was also the Son of God, must go to Calvary. You nails, you must pierce Him. Wood, you must uplift Him. Soldiers, you must bruise Him. Death, it needs you that you should smite Him. There, sinner! There! There is that which can make the angel sheath his sword. In Gethsemane and on Calvary rest your eye—there God is teaching you—see!

He must punish sin. How dreadfully He punishes it in Christ! Hark to the groans that come from His heart. Hear His death-shriek and His awful cry, “*Lama Sabacthani?*” God is just, for He is punishing Christ. Believe you in Christ, trust Him. Then shall you know that God has punished your Savior instead of you—by His chastisement you are made free. He cannot punish two for one offense. He will not first smite your Surety, and then smite you.

Rejoice in this, that if Jesus died for you, He released you from condemnation, and He secured for you eternal redemption.

Christ has paid the whole penalty. Your utmost liability He has discharged. The wrath of God, retribution in full, or its equivalent, has Christ endured for you, absolved you from sin, and delivered you from the curse of the law by His vicarious sacrifice. He has robed you in His righteousness and washed you in His blood. Such grace have you received who have believed in His name and taken shelter beneath His cross. Such truth was David taught concerning sin, punishment, and substitution.

And mark it, beloved, as soon as the bullock smoked and the angel put back his sword, the plague was stayed—not one more died in Jerusalem—no, not one. They might be sick, but the fever left them. Some might be on their beds given up by the physician, but the sheathing of the sword restored them to health. It was not the physician’s healing art, it was the mystic virtue of the sacrifice that saved their life.

Consider this, O guilty, terror-stricken sinner. When Jesus died, from that day forward no sinner that believed in Him ever did perish, or ever could. The redeemed are distinguished by their faith in the Redeemer. Disciples may be recognized by their allegiance to the Lord. Christians are identified by their conformity to Christ. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. Hell does not hold a soul that ever trusted Christ. You might as leave expect to find a rebellious apostate in heaven, as a penitent believer in hell. It cannot be.

The moment you trust Christ, at that moment for you the sword is sheathed. Cast yourself on Jesus—it is a simple, but a saving act. As soon as you have come to rest on Him alone, without other prop or pillar, you are surely saved. Were you already on the plains of glory, with the white robe about you, and the golden harp in your hand, your salvation would not be more certain.

Cheer up, beloved. Let gladness fire your heart and rapture flame your tongue. Be of good courage, you timid, downcast seeker. If Jesus died for you, you have no cause for fear. Believe you in Him—you have the witness in yourself. Your faith is the key of your fellowship. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven. No angel can smite you—you are exempt from the commission of the destroyer—you are saved. Such, I think, was the teaching which God communicated to David.

Now grant us a moment's pause, and we turn to—

II. THE REASON OF DAVID'S CONSECRATING THE SPOT TO BE THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE.

The temple, be it remembered, was the designed meeting place between God and man. It is highly suggestive, therefore, that David consecrated *the floor of sacrifice*, for there the sword was sheathed, the anger appeased, and the grace made conspicuous. There, therefore, should the sanctuary be reared. Is there a spot of ground, or is there a ground of reconciliation where you or I can safely meet with God, except where the atonement of Christ has prevailed to avert the penalty of our transgressions?

We often meet with people who neglect our solemn assemblies, accounting church or chapel alike objectionable, while they profess to find in their private gardens, or on the open heath, a nobler temple. They prefer the songs of the birds to the psalms of the saints, and the murmur of the river to the melody of worship. Their love of nature is so absorbing, that the spiritual has no charms for them.

They tread the clods and gaze on the clouds with a gratification akin to the beasts that perish. On their Sabbath they are like a horse turned out into the meadow—they cease from labor and enjoy the interval of repose. Do they tell you that they worship the God of nature? Their self-deception is too transparent. You are not stupid enough to believe them. Did you follow them, I expect you would find that their idol was Bacchus, and the god they honored on these days was their own belly.

So far from really seeking quiet retirement to worship the Almighty, they spend the Lord's day in wanton pleasure and sensual riot. We don't believe in such worship as these professed votaries of nature affect to offer. We hear of the piety, but we have never seen anything but the profanity. Besides, could we give a man credit for his sincerity in worship, we would be disposed to ask what sort of a divinity it is they accredit, admire, and adore. The God of nature, they tell us, is all benevolence without alloy, and they flatter themselves that He does not punish sin, avenge guilt, or condemn the evildoer.

Pardon me, but by your leave, I would correct your misapprehensions. What law of nature do you think you can violate with impunity? When of old our forefathers sinned against sanitary laws, did not God punish them? What do you think of the plague of London and the multitudes dying in every house, till Aldgate pit was crammed and there was scarcely place to bury the bodies?

The God of nature did that, be it recollected. Men violated His laws and straightway He smote them. Can you trespass against what are called natural laws without fear? I cannot. Have you forgotten the terrible experiences of America when she denied to the black population its natural rights and sinned against the slaves? How did God smite that vast continent?

Remember you not the Northern and Southern States in deadly conflict, and the battlefields red with blood? What, though a brother's hand was lifted against his brother, it was no less God's punishment of sin. Among your own selves, when a man defiles himself with vice, does not the penalty he incurs make

you shudder to think of it? Ay, and will not it be visited upon his children? Shall they not feel it to the third and fourth generation? Surely it is the God of nature who thus openly punishes sin.

"The God of nature," as Byron puts it, "mirrors Himself in tempests as well as in green fields, and is as much to be seen riding the whirlwind, and making the clouds His chariot amidst the storm, as He is in the fair flowers and the sweetly singing birds."

If you will make your appeals to the God of nature, look what sort of God He is. I aver that the God of nature is a God of judgment, nor is there a meeting place between a conscious, reasonable, awakened rebellious man and the God that rules the universe, except through a sacrifice—that sacrifice the cross. Assuredly I know that my soul could never realize a possibility of communion with my Creator except at the foot of the cross, where justice was honored and mercy manifested.

*"Till God in human flesh I see
My thoughts no comfort find."*

Young men, members of this church, I want you to be thoroughly initiated into this doctrine of redemption. Understand it clearly, and then contend for it manfully, I pray you. If once you give up this fortress, you will be exposed to the most dismal skepticism—nay, you will be open to stark atheism. Should you discredit the atonement of Christ, young man, you will have pulled up your anchors and you must drift before the wind.

You cannot draw near to God without the cross. Only an Araunah's threshing floor can furnish the site of a temple. If you forsake the altar and the sacrifice, you will be forsaken of God, and ere long, you will relinquish truth and righteousness. From holiness and happiness you will then be estranged. In any pulpit where the doctrine of the atonement is kept back, the tide of teaching drifts to Socinianism—and there is small margin left, but a narrow line to separate the Unitarian from the infidel.

The temple is not only the meeting place for man with his God—no less is it the meeting place for man with his fellow man. There is never such unity as that which comes through the cross. The baptismal pool is not the rallying place for all believers, as full many are there baptized into the waters of controversy. Oh! my soul, come not into their secret!

Certainly no doctrinal confession or orthodox creed supplies a *locus standi* where all see eye to eye, for good people hold very different views—yet the children of God are of one family, notwithstanding their diversity of opinions. Whenever we come to talk about the cross, we sheath our swords. There is no fighting there. John Wesley sings—

*"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."*

And Toplady sings—

*"Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."*

Wesley denounces Toplady in the pulpit. Toplady calls John Wesley, "the old fox, tarred and feathered." But when they come hither to Christ Jesus, their bitterness is all laid aside. They meet, as you clearly see, in harmony, and their sentiments are the same. Lift high the cross, then, preacher. Lift high the cross, Sunday school teacher. Here, and here only, righteousness meets with peace, embraces man, and man embraces his brother, and we become one with each other, and then one in Christ Jesus.

We shall now turn to a second reason for his dedication. *The temple was the manifesting place.* The Jew never dreamed of seeing God anywhere but in the temple. He went up to its sacred courts that in the various services of God's house he might behold the beauty of the Lord. The High Priest, on the day of atonement, saw God in the mysterious light which glistened between the wings of the Cherubim—the light called the Shechinah, the only manifest indwelling of deity, the only light of God which human eye could clearly behold.

The temple, I say, was God's unrobing place. To every high priest a favor, akin to that accorded to Moses, was given. Moses was put into the clefts of the rock that He might see the skirts of JEHOVAH's robe—so every high priest of the Jews, and every Jew in his high priest, saw in the temple as much of God as could be seen under that dispensation.

See then, friends, it is fitting that the place where Christ makes the sacrifice should be the place of manifesting God to man. We declare, without fear of controversy, that there is more divinity in the wounded body of Christ than in all the round world besides. If any man would see God unto perfection, let him behold yon bleeding man! If he would see God's love, let him behold the Son of God, incarnate, suffering in the sinner's stead. If he would see God's justice, let him behold the Only Begotten of the Father, pierced with every arrow out of heaven's quiver, wounded in every part and particle of His spirit and His body, that He may bear the curse for guilty men.

If he would see God's omnipotence, let Him behold it in Christ, bearing the sin of the world, and yet with unbroken bones. If he would see the wisdom of God, let him discover it in the ignominious cross, where the Savior expiates the sin of man. There is no attribute of God which is not clearly seen there. It is not one solitary star, but it is like the Pleiades—a constellation of the brightest stars in Christ.

I see not the stars, but the sun in Christ. I see not the robes of deity, but deity itself. Here I see not heaven's pearly gates, but heaven unfolded to each eye. Here I see not merely God's works, but verily God's heart—not so much the attributes of the Almighty, as Almighty God Himself. Turning aside from the burning bush of Calvary, where Jesus burns with fire and is not consumed, I say, "We have seen God! We have seen Him face to face."

I must repeat it—that nowhere else is God to be so clearly seen as in the cross. Those who refuse to see God in Christ, presently become callous to the evidence of the eternal power and Godhead anywhere.

"Charity" is the cry I hear. "Charity" is lauded everywhere. Yes, in fact, more charitable than Christ, I suppose, some would have us to be in our toleration of heresy. But what says the Scripture? It says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." What says it? "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved."

Do you remember the emphatic saying of the apostle Paul? "If any man preach any other gospel than that you have received, let him be anathema maranatha." This new charity, I know nothing of, nor did our fathers before us. The Puritans and the Covenanters could bleed and die, but they could not yield the blood-red flag of the cross of Christ.

Our blessed ancestors, the Albigenses and Waldenses, from whom, in a direct line, we sprang, could dare the snows of the mountains and stain them crimson with their bloody feet, but they could not surrender the truth. Those early confessors of the faith, from whom we have sprung, could suffer at the harlot's hand—the harlot of Rome—and shed their blood like water for the Lord God of Hosts. This was the rallying cry, from which they could never depart. "We can see in Christ the only way of salvation."

Without controversy God was manifested in the flesh. He has wrought out an atonement for His people. By that blood-besprinkled path we enter into heaven. Yes, dear friends, the doctrine of the atonement, or rather the atonement itself, is God's only meeting place with man, and it is God's only place of revelation to man, if man would see Him rightly and distinctly.

Now thirdly, *the temple was the home of joy*. Oh! what song, what sacred harmony went up to heaven from Mount Zion! I have sometimes been in this house when my willing soul was fain to stay and sing herself away to the celestial plains. When I have heard the songs of the thousands of God's saints here, I have thought no rapture could exceed it.

But our songs, I reckon, were poor compared with the multitudes of Israel coming from the North, South, East, and West, from Dan, from Beersheba, and from beyond Jordan—they came up like rivers of harmony, and when they got a sight of the golden roof of the temple, their hearts beat high and their voices grew jubilant.

With golden trumpets and silver trumpets they sounded forth volumes of melody, and then, with divers instruments and vocal notes, sent up their joyful sound of grateful praises to the Most High. Priest and elders led the tune, and ten thousand times ten thousand of all the tribes cried, "Hosanna!" or chanted some of the glorious strains of David.

Oh! how good and pleasant a thing it must have been in those days to go up to the house of the Lord. And oh! how marvelous that just that threshing floor, where first an atonement was made for Jerusalem, should be the spot where all this song should gather. The music abounds where the blood freely flowed—where wrath stayed, there sacred mirth begins.

Beloved, the richest joy that earth and heaven could know springs from the crystal fount of Jesus' side. Heaven was never so glad as when He ascended up on high. Then they tuned their harps anew—

*"They brought the chariot from on high
To bear Him to His throne,
Clapped their triumphant wings, and cried,
'The glorious work is done.'"*

You and I are never so happy as when we see our pardon, our full redemption there. Then I think we can sing—

*"Oh! for such love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Savior's praises speak."*

If you want to be very happy, sit down under the shadow of the cross. Would you be supremely blest, remember the threshing floor of Araunah. There the pestilence raged, the angel stood, the bullock smoked, and the plague was stayed. That is the place where song finds its focus—there abide and be glad all your days.

Yet a fourth thought may be worthy of your remembrance. *The temple was a type of the church*, therefore, the temple must be built where the sacrifice stayed the plague. The foundation stone of the church is the Person of Christ. The doctrine of atonement is the interpretation of His work on the earth. If any man believe in the atonement of Christ and trusts himself to its fact and its issues, he is a Christian.

He that believes not in our Redeemer's wondrous passion, and His complete satisfaction to the justice of God, may call himself what he likes, and assert his profession by what name he pleases—a Christian he is not. Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is a church. But the richest corporation, with the highest dignities that a nation can confer, will never make a church, unless the doctrine of the atonement is strongly maintained and clearly taught.

I would not judge harshly or speak rashly. But most solemnly I do believe there are hundreds of pulpits in London that never give a sound about the atonement of Christ. That Christ did something on the cross they admit—what He did, they cannot determine. Popular books published by learned divines tell us we ought not to inquire, nor need we wish to know. A certain mythical reconciliation was effected, but as to His really suffering vicariously for sinners, the just for the unjust, this is left to such weak intellects as popular evangelists may possess.

As for these refined gentry, so learned that nobody can understand them, and so attractive that they have more spiders than hearers in their places of worship, they are far too philosophical to preach an atonement. Oh! no, it just suits the common mind, they say. Do you know, sirs, I have heard that at a college, where young men are being trained to preach, after a discussion held upon the question, "Has the modern revival of Puritan doctrine done more good than harm?" the affirmative was carried by a majority of one—of barely one!

Well now, as Puritan doctrine is neither more nor less than a consistent exposition of the Gospel, with a corresponding demand for simplicity and sincerity of life, we are prone to ask what is to be expected of the instructors of the rising generation? Are these the gentlemen in training to teach the sons of toil? What kind of spiritual food will they dispense to those who wait on their ministry? Will these gentlemen preach Christ crucified, or will they strain and dilute the Gospel till their sermons echo nothing but the sentiments of the age and the utilitarian morals that pass current in their times?

Rather may this house be utterly consumed with fire, and not so much as one stone be left upon another that shall not be cast down, than the day should come when here there should be given an uncertain sound about the atonement. This is not merely a doctrine of the church, it is *the* doctrine of the church. Leave this out and you have no truth—you have no Savior, no church.

As Luther said of the doctrine of justification by faith, that it was the article of a standing or falling church, so we affirm of the atonement—the complete efficacious atonement—the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men. Cling to it you that would build up the saints on their most holy faith. For life, or for death, cling to it. Be this your cornerstone. Be this your vermilion cement with which you bind your members to one another. Be this your trowel. Be this your hammer and be this your sword. Be this your one essential—account it your indispensable implement—if you would honor God and if you would build up His church.

And finally, as this was to be the place for the foundation of sacred fellowship, *so it must be the altar on which all the offerings were to be made to JEHOVAH*. Brethren, it was meet that the place where Christ died—the place, I mean, where the sacrifice stayed the devastating sword of judgment—that this Mount Zion should be the spot where the people of God offered their sacrifices and peace offerings.

Mere exhortations to propriety are of no avail. You may preach never so eloquently on sobriety without rescuing a single drunkard. You may eulogize chastity to the admiration of the lascivious. You may extol honesty in the midst of knaves and thieves, who will praise your fair speech. Precept has no regenerative power. People do not get good by having goodness preached at them. Pure Christianity is not propagated by the law.

And in the community of saints, legality is of no avail. Whips are for the backs of fools. Saints need more sacred stimulus. Threats may keep simpletons in check, but for Christian men, promises are of more account. If I want to stir you to action, and to promote among you some good work, I must preach up Christ, feed your souls with the bread of heaven and then, after that, divine grace will work in you effectually and the goodness will flow out of you instantaneously.

Behold the place where Jesus shed His blood! Hither, then, your offerings bring. Dedicate yourselves as whole burnt offerings unto God—your time, your talents, your substance. No man brings his offering to Sinai, but thousands bring their sacrifices to Calvary. No man goes for a missionary, I hope, from stress of duty, except it is the man who found Zulu Kaffirs too much for him.

We go as missionaries not from a sense of duty, but from a sense of love to Christ. Love will make a man do and dare. He will carry his life in his hands. He will go to savages, among them to endure privations, or to die. Not from duty's imperious call. That is a spur that Christians do not always feel. But love—love to Jesus, love to men, gratitude to God for what He has done for them—zeal for man and desire to benefit his race will prompt devout and heroic action.

Preach the cross, minister, and you never need doubt that your sermons will be practical. The atonement is the most practical of all doctrines. Those who preach up works, play with projects, and produce no profits—while those who preach up Christ cultivate holiness and reap fruits of righteousness unto life eternal.

Ask yourself, good friend, have you ever found Christ to be a place for you to meet with God? If you have not, if you would meet God, go straightway to Christ, trust Him, and so shall you find God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is His own declaration. Go to the cross, O you who feel your burden of sin! There, all is done for you.

The site of the cross is the place where the temple of joy is reared. Do you want to be at peace with your neighbor? Go you both to the altar where Jesus died—there your peace shall be cemented. Do you want to build up a church in your neighborhood, any of you? Go to Christ and lean on His promise. He is the Rock on which you shall be made strong. None but Jesus—none but Jesus!

Strive not to make yourselves better. Seek not to get to heaven by merit—give up your foolish reasons and resolves. You may work at the treadmill, but you will get no higher—not an inch nearer to the stars will you be with all your efforts. Flat before the cross cast yourself, sinner—rags and all, hard heart and all—

*“Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid myself of one foul blot.
To Him whose blood can cleanse each spot,
Oh! Lamb of God, I come, I come.”*

And coming thus to Christ you have come to happiness, to safety, to heaven. So may your heart incline you. So may the Spirit lead you. So may Jesus save you. So may God, even the Father, accept you. And to the triune JEHOVAH shall be the praise forever. Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.